

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 MMS-01 AF-04 EA-06 ACDA-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 IO-10 /088 W

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R 051146Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1941

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 3371

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, PARM, UK, IO, CE

SUBJ: BRITISH APPROVAL OF U.S. DIEGO PLANS: SRI LANKA REACTION

REF: STATE 264711

1. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION TOLD US MORNING
DECEMBER 3 THAT IT HAD DISCRETION INFORMED GSL "
FEW HOURS AHEAD OF TIME" OF DIEGO AND GAN PORTIONS
OF PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT ON RESULTS HMG'S DEFENSE
REVIEW, AND THAT ACCORDINGLY BRITISH HIGH
COMMISSIONER HAD APPOINTMENT WITH TISSA WIJEYERATNE,
ADDITIONAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, LATE THAT AFTERNOON.

2. BRITISH HAVE NOW REPORTED THAT WIJEYERATNE'S
REACTION ON DIEGO WAS LOW KEY AND HIS EXPRESSION
OF CONCERN "PRO FORMA". HE IMPLIED THAT GSL
HAD RATHER EXPECTED HMG APPROVAL OF DIEGO EXPANSION
AND SAID ONLY THAT THERE MIGHT BE SOME NOISES ON THE
LEFT. WIJEYERATNE WAS MUCH MORE WORRIED ABOUT
BRITISH WITHDRAWAL FROM GAN.

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3. COVERAGE OF PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT IN LOCAL PRESS HAS BEEN PROMINENT ON INSIDE INTER NATIONAL NEWS PAGES BUT CONFIRMED TO REUTERS REPORTS. IN ONE STORY, FACT OF WITHDRAWAL FROM GAN WAS MENTIONED AS PART OF LISTING OF VARIOUS PLACES FROM WHICH WITHDRAWAL IS PLANNED. ONLY ONE ARTICLE HAS REFERRED TO AGREEMENT TO PROCEED WITH PLANS TO EXPAND FACILITIES ON DIEGO GARCIA. MAIN PRESS EMPHASIS HAS BEEN ON BRITISH INTENTION TO PULL OUT OF SIMONSTOWN AGREEMENT WITH SOUTH AFRICA AND WITHDRAWAL FROM SOUTHEAST ASIA, ESPECIALLY SINGAPORE.

4. WE DECIDED NOT TO MAKE ANY FORMAL APPROACHES TO GSL ON MATTER BUT WILL RESPOND TO ANY CEYLONESE COMMENTS OR INQUIRIES IN LINE WITH DEPARTMENT'S GUIDANCE SET FORTH REFTEL AND IN STATE 22251, FEBRUARY 5.
BYRNE

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30 JUN 2005

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